Athletic Council
March 1, 2024

Attending: Tim Anderson, Nancy Buffone, Rebecca Spencer, Ryan Bamford, Rod Warnick, Ed Ward, Linda Griffin (co-chair), Doug Martini, Brett LeClair, Kirsten Britton, Eric Carcich, Tim Mitchell

1. **Approval of the minutes from February 9, 2024** - approved

2. **Guest coach: Eric Carcich (Rowing)**
   Over the past 4 years, went from 5th to 4th to 3rd last year. This year, all 4 classes were recruited by this staff. Biggest competitors will be GW and URI. "Progress not perfection." Went on training trip to Sarasota FL, was on the water by Feb 2nd. Spring break they'll head south to train. Open the season in Sarasota FL competition.

   Roster: Initially was a more regional team; now recruit hard internationally. Focus on rowing skill and also fit (energy, attitude). "Energy providers not energy consumers." Just recruited in Australia and New Zealand.

   Majors: Kinesiology has been our biggest draw. But really spans majors – psych, linguistics, pre-med. Students average 3.4ish GPA.

   Recruiting: Erg times, hours of Zoom to get to know their personality. See them in their space. Also, can get a sense from video.

   Most rowing is on the CT, otherwise the Oxbow. Some small lakes.

   What will rowing do in MAC – apply to stay as an affiliate member in A10 for rowing. This will be decided in April by the AD group. Backup plan is to work with the MAC to possibly sponsor rowing. There is one other team (EMU) there now and they would have to take 4 affiliate members.

3. **Guest administrator: Brett LeClair (Assoc AD of Finance and Business)**
   Presented the finance report to subcommittee. Last year, deficit was retired extensively (cut cost, froze positions). Most costs are stable when there are no big coaching changes.

   What is the subsidy from student fees? 23% of our budget. Rate and size of that is not in the control of Athletics.

   Budget report for Faculty Senate is different than it is for other outlets (e.g., NCAA, DOE).

   MLAX increase was for a game guarantee.

Does NIL money make them employees? Yes, they are providing a service for the funder, so they pay taxes. If students are determined to be employees, they could then make the case for residency.

Football: game guarantees, recruiting, all have been neutral; scholarships, salaries have increased. We will have UConn, Bryant/Wagner, Temple and we will go to Iowa – we will unload a few other commitments

4. **Report of the AD**

We've been in the A10 for 48 years. Conference affiliation has been top of mind for the past 9 years. Have been watching the changes in the past 5 years (transfer portal, NIL, realignment of conferences, college football playoff) – independents do not get money from college football playoff (unless you're Notre Dame). We don't get to negotiate this either. But the ESPN contract for the playoff, a sizable increase, makes this valuable. So other schools have been moving to FBS and joining a league, are making more money than us. At the same time, we have gone from $1 mil to $300K in revenues from A10. Getting only one bid to the BB championship is only bringing this done. CUSA was another option, but they are composed of many schools that just made the change to FCS football. Meanwhile MAC wanted us – financially good, schools are more aligned with us (publics, 4 R1 universities, similar profiles) and much more stable than other leagues (haven't added anyone since the late 90s; Marshall left in 2005). Conservative estimates put us in a $2 mil revenue increase in year 2. This is countered by some increase in travel expenses (which is ~ $300-400K). MAC is 24th, A10 is 8th in MBB – so this is not as good for MBB. But the trend is they are both 1-bid leagues. A10 is always going to be better, but we have a chance to be competitive and make the tournament in the MAC. The timing is challenging as MBB is doing well. But we stay a competitive team with investments even when we go to MAC. We will be "the standard of academic and athletic excellence in this league." $4 mil buyout from the A10, $2 mil entry to the MAC, sources of this will be from some future revenues, some fundraising.

We will be the largest program (athletes and budgets) in the MAC. Toledo has the biggest football budget (we are second).

We want to play a tough MBB schedule regardless to keep our profile – we may schedule up.

The MACtion does Tues/Wed games and that could be good for students, gets media attention, can be good for branding (requires smoothing for the neighborhood though).

MAC had men's soccer, they will add 6th and 7th to get back to a men's soccer sports sponsorship. As a men's soccer league, they will be good.

Current sports: Indoor T&F, swimming finished. Mens Swim finished 2nd in A10. Divers doing really well 1 female 2 males going to zones – new coach is doing really well. WBB starts next week (we play Wed) and MBB has 2 more reg season games (a chance to win 20 games) – we will likely be the 6th seed. All 6 teams are playing well and have a chance to win the league. Ice hockey has huge 2 weekends to make the pairwise. Need to win 3 of the next 4 (both this weekend) and split the next weekend. Battling for the 3-4th seed.